

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health in Care (England) Policy

Policy Statement

This care provider recognises that staff, service users and visitors should be as safe as possible from the threat of harm through contact with chemicals or other dangerous substances.

It recognises that the best way to ensure this state of safety exists is to comply fully with the law as set out in the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) and the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, which sets out standards of safe care.

The service acknowledges that no substance can be considered completely safe. All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure all exposure of employees, visitors and service users to substances hazardous to health is prevented or at least controlled to within statutory limits.

Guidance

The care service will comply fully with the following Health and Safety Executive COSHH guidance.

- HSG220 (2nd edition) *Health and Safety in Care Homes*
- INDG136 (rev5) *Working with Substances Hazardous to Health: A Brief Guide to COSHH*
- L5 (sixth edition) *The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended). Approved Code of Practice and Guidance*

Arrangements for Securing the Health and Safety of Workers

The service will, in consultation with workers and their representatives, implement the following.

- Safe systems of work procedures will be devised for all activities that involve potential exposure to a hazardous substance.
- The following steps will be taken to minimise risk.
 - COSHH risk assessments will be carried out and will be reviewed at least annually or when changes are made.

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- Hazard information will be kept up to date, including safety data sheets about identified chemicals and hazards kept in a central location and made available to staff as appropriate.
 - Employees will be trained in the nature of the hazards identified and the use of control measures.
 - Controls will be maintained and monitored.
 - Risk assessment documentation will be comprehensive and understandable and shared with appropriate staff.
 - Staff will be encouraged to report potential hazards, defects, faults and problems.
 - Systems will be in place for emergencies and for the provision of temporary replacement controls, eg personal protective equipment (PPE).
- An inventory of all substances hazardous to health kept on site will be maintained with appropriate hazard information.
 - Competent persons will be appointed to carry out risk assessments of the exposure to substances hazardous to health and advise on their control.
 - All operations which involve, or may involve, exposure to substances hazardous to health will be assessed and appropriate control measures will be taken if elimination or substitution of the substance is not possible.
 - Any system of work, supervision system or any other similar measure will be reviewed at suitable intervals and revised if necessary.
 - All employees and others who may work in the affected areas will be informed of the purpose and safe operation of working procedures and equipment.
 - PPE will only be used as a last resort or as a back-up measure to be used in conjunction with other safety arrangements.
 - The type and use of PPE will be carefully assessed and maintained according to manufacturers' instructions. If possible, the number of different types will be minimised to prevent mistakes in servicing or replacement.
 - Each assessment will be reviewed at least annually.
 - Qualified professionals, where indicated to be necessary by the assessment, will carry out health surveillance.
 - Employee health records of all exposures to substances hazardous to health will be kept for a minimum of 40 years.

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- All employees will be provided with understandable information and appropriate training on the nature of the hazardous substances they work with. Employees will be informed about any monitoring and health surveillance results.
- All changes to control measures and changes of PPE will be properly assessed and no new substances will be introduced into the workplace without prior assessment.

Procedures for Dealing with COSHH Concerns or Exposures

When an employee raises a concern or reports an exposure related to the use of substances hazardous to health, the organisation will:

- make any necessary provisions for the health or safety of individuals affected or identified as potentially at risk
- carry out a suitable risk assessment or review an existing risk assessment
- ensure the hazard associated with the substance has been correctly identified
- ensure any information relating to the use of the substance is correct and up to date
- ensure controls in place are suitable and adequate
- correct any observed deficiencies in the control of the hazards
- inform the employee, and their representative if appropriate, of the results of the investigation and actions taken
- initiate and maintain any necessary health surveillance.

If an identified exposure has taken place, those affected and their managers and representatives will be informed immediately. Possible health effects will, in addition, be communicated to the organisation's occupational health physician and the employee's general practitioner, with the employee's permission.

Information and Training

All employees will be provided with understandable information and instruction on the nature and likelihood of their exposure to substances hazardous to health.

The organisation will give sufficient information and training to ensure full understanding of the hazards to health posed by substances in the workplace and the importance of the control measures provided. Information will also be given to others who may be affected, such as:

- contractors
- temporary staff

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- visitors.

Managers and supervisors of areas which use substances hazardous to health will be given additional training to ensure the proper management of the risks.

Training will commence on the first day of employment so that employees are familiar with the basic concepts of COSHH and with safe working procedures once they are at their place of work. This training will be in line with the requirements of Standard 13: Health and Safety of the Care Certificate. Thereafter, employees will be expected to attend regular updates and will be provided with adequate health and safety training on their being exposed to new or increased risks because of a change of job, work equipment, system of work, etc.

All new staff must attend induction training.



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